

# THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 86/NO. 29 AUGUST 8, 2022

## US rulers face political crisis as workers seek road forward

BY TERRY EVANS

The U.S. capitalist rulers face a political crisis. Plunging support for President Joseph Biden in the polls; continued anti-Trump hysteria by liberals, the middle-class left and Never-Trump Republicans; as well as deepening divisions tearing at both the Democratic and Republican parties, are some of the symptoms.

The two-party shell game has served the capitalist rulers well for decades, but it is shattering today fueled by their growing fear of the working class, as we begin to push back against the bosses' drive to put the economic and social crisis of the capitalist system on our backs.

With no accomplishments to run on in November's election, and Biden's tanking support, Democrats are desperately ramping up their stage-managed congressional "hearings," seeking to pillory former President Donald Trump for the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol in 2021. They claim this was nothing less than a failed

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## Support Ukraine independence! Get Moscow's troops out now!

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Russian missiles struck Ukraine's key Black Sea port of Odesa July 23 just one day after Moscow signed an agreement brokered by the U.N. and Turkish government to unblock shipments by Kyiv of Ukrainian grain exports stored there. The Ukrainian government called the provocative attack a "spit in the face" that threatened to deny badly needed food to toilers in Africa and the Middle East.

Moscow's attack — which the Russian government claimed was aimed at Ukrainian weapons — reveals its utter contempt for millions of working people. President Vladimir Putin views them as expendable pawns in his efforts to crush Ukraine and expand Russia's reach.

Despite the damage, Kyiv officials announced they will push ahead on the grain shipments. Ukrainian forces are clearing safe channels through sea mine defenses.

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## Owner-operator truckers shut down Oakland port

Independent truckers fight state law, threat to livelihoods



CalMatters/Martin do Nascimento

Backed by dockworkers, independent truckers and supporters shut Oakland port July 21.

BY ERIC SIMPSON

OAKLAND, Calif. — A protest and strike by owner-operator truckers and their supporters tied up the Port of Oakland for five days July 18-22. Hundreds

remained up until Friday and shipping came to a standstill.

These independent owner-operators are opposing a California law called the "gig worker" law, or AB5, which was enacted in January 2020. Originally motivated because of exploitative conditions facing Uber and other app drivers, it was also applied to some 70,000 truck

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## Join campaign to expand reach of 'Militant,' books by SWP leaders



Militant/Miguel Zarate

Community activist and retired truck driver Eugene Jenkins gets *Militant* subscription from Candace Wagner, SWP candidate for governor of Pennsylvania, July 22 in Philadelphia.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

"I'm a Democrat, but I don't agree with a lot of what's going on, including what's in the media, whether it's CNN or Fox News. You can't trust either side," Hamza Hassan told Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party can-

didate for California governor, when Britton knocked on his door in Hayward, July 16.

"Whether they say it's Republican versus Democrat, CNN versus Fox, red states versus blue — it's really a class divide," Britton said. "Neither party has answers to inflation and the attacks on workers today. We need to do everything we can to unite work-

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## 40,000 rail workers strike across the UK

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began picketing the first day, flagging all truckers away from terminal entrances.

The next day, when longshore workers, members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, arrived for work, they refused to cross. Union officials told workers to go home, citing safety concerns, and the port was closed for the rest of the week. Pickets

## On heels of Biden trip to the Mideast, Moscow, Ankara, Tehran hold talks

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Russian President Vladimir Putin, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met in Tehran July 19, in the shadow of Moscow's war on Ukraine. All three powers at the summit clash with Washington, but each has its own conflicting interests, including over rival military interventions in Syria, relations with Israel and over the Kurds.

The summit in Iran's capital took place days after President Joseph Biden ended his trip to Israel and Saudi Arabia. His meetings illustrated the U.S. rulers' weakened position, and garnered little to advance their interests. Nonetheless, Washington remains the world's domi-

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## Case strikers stand strong in Iowa, Wisconsin as talks are set to resume

BY JOHN HAWKINS

STURTEVANT, Wis. — "I'm not going to get my hopes up, but negotiations are scheduled to resume the week of Aug. 14," United Auto Workers Local 807 President Nick Guernsey told the *Militant* by phone July 24.

More than 1,000 members of the union walked off the job May 2 at two

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Montreal Casino strikers enter third month on picket line

UK bus drivers strike to protect their wages from inflation

**SWP files for ballot in Pennsylvania**  
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# Nat'l Federation of Blind traces its aims, history, fight for rights

BY JANE ROLAND

NEW ORLEANS — The National Federation of the Blind held its annual convention here July 5-10. The NFB is the largest organization of the blind and those with low vision in the U.S. and its national conventions are the largest gatherings of blind people in the world. Close to 2,500 people registered in person at this year's event, with an additional 1,500 following various sessions by Zoom.

In his remarks at the convention banquet, President Mark Riccobono spoke about the group's history and aims. When organized attention began to be paid to the situation of the blind in the late 19th century, he said, initial efforts were taken "through institutional systems built for us, not by us — schools for the blind, sheltered employment settings" — usually sites for the superexploitation of workers who were blind, with pittance wages and abysmal conditions — "and even homes for the blind. While these institutions afforded us the opportunity to bond together, they also had the effect of reinforcing the very misconceptions that held us back."

In those days, Riccobono said, everything was organized around "institutionalized charity and low expectations. The idea that we should or could speak and act for ourselves was a direct contradiction to the narrative upon which many agencies for the blind had built their services."

When the National Federation of the Blind was launched by leaders of seven state organizations in 1940, he said, its pioneers found power in "the equal pro-

tection clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution — protections resulting from the work" of those who had fought to bring down chattel slavery in the 19th century. It's important never to "miss the unique and singularly powerful reason" for the new organization, he said. "No one else was to set the direction and priorities — only the blind. No one else was to speak for the movement — only the blind representatives elected by the blind. No other aspect was more critical than the reality that it was a blind people's movement."

By the 1980s, he said, the National Federation of the Blind had gained the maturity and confidence "to grow in new dimensions," for example, establishing a national organization of parents as a way "to incorporate families of blind children into our movement."

To expand access by the blind to newspapers, magazines and books, he said, the NFB has "shaped the copyright laws of the nation to include us" and "raised the awareness of Braille literacy." It has organized to improve educational standards, raise wages, expand access to voting and protected "our ability to travel independently on the streets of America."

"As blind people, we seek to live in the world, not apart from it," Riccobono said. "We are not immune from the broader trends in society. We live within them."

### Convention activity

The convention registered participants' confidence and pride in their accomplishments — from being com-



Militant/Gale Shangold

**Pathfinder volunteer Harvey McArthur shows Brooke Coelho how accessible e-book files of books by Socialist Workers Party, other revolutionaries can be read by people who are blind.**

petent parents, to taking on challenging jobs of all kinds, to competition in athletics at the highest levels.

Delegates discussed and adopted resolutions aimed at eliminating obstacles blind people face in daily life. These include federal legislation guaranteeing websites be accessible to the blind; state laws guaranteeing the right to mail-in ballots and barring employers from requiring driver's licenses for jobs not involving driving; developing home COVID tests that can be administered and read by the blind; and requiring e-books produced in the U.S. to have accessibility features that make photos and illustrations, indexes, tables of contents, glossaries, footnotes and other reader aids available to those with no or limited vision.

Participants focused on the pressing need for jobs. Some 70% to 80% of blind people are unemployed, said convention speakers. It was reported that the NFB, working together with the World Blind Union, has helped raise substantial funds to assist blind people in Ukraine.

### Pathfinder Press table

Pathfinder Press was among the convention exhibitors for the first time this year. Some 30 Pathfinder titles are already available to blind and low-vision readers through the website Bookshare.org, the result of efforts by volunteers who want to read these books and have done the work to format and

post them for others.

Pathfinder is now organizing to add additional titles and to enhance their accessibility features. Accessible e-books have descriptions of images and navigation features needed by blind readers using screen-reader software, and they can be converted into Braille, audio and other digital formats.

Volunteers at the Pathfinder table distributed several hundred flyers in Braille and in large-print format listing Pathfinder e-books available through Bookshare.org. Sighted participants bought 15 books and two subscriptions to the *Militant* newspaper.

Bruce Roberds, a retired union activist from Wichita, Kansas, who lost his sight as a teenager, was attracted to the book *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record*. He said he had thought Hillary Clinton was "a pretty good choice" in 2016. "But I'm open to hearing something different and changing my mind," he said, after talking with people at the Pathfinder table. He's looking forward to the title being available to the blind.

Volunteers demonstrated Pathfinder's new, accessible e-book files to several dozen convention participants. Several signed up to give feedback once they can try out the files themselves.

Kia Vaca from Louisiana was especially interested in the work involved in turning a print book file into an EPUB file. "I really appreciate what your volunteers are doing," she said.

# THE MILITANT

## Iran teachers fight for wages, free schools

Thousands of teachers have been demonstrating across Iran, demanding wage increases to keep up with inflation and protesting government moves that impose fees on public education. The *'Militant'* builds support for working people fighting to defend our interests.



Iranian Labour News Agency/Mehdi Nasiri  
Retirees protest in Tehran Jan. 17. Placards say, "Employed and retired, unity, unity."

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.



# Socialist Workers Party files for 2022 ballot in Pennsylvania

BY JOHN STAGGS

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The Socialist Workers Party in Philadelphia completed a statewide campaigning effort to get out the party’s program and win ballot status for Chris Hoeppner, the party’s candidate for Congress in Pennsylvania’s 3rd District. Campaigners collected 2,422 signatures, well over the amount required, days earlier than anticipated, introducing thousands of working people to the party and its candidates, selling 59 *Militant* subscriptions and 46 books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries.

The petitions were filed here July 27 where Hoeppner was joined by fellow SWP candidates in Pennsylvania, Osborne Hart for U.S. Senate and Candace Wagner for governor, as well as Larry Otter, the SWP campaign’s lawyer.

“I think something needs to be done about policing the police,” car salesman Chris Paden told Wagner and campaign supporter Miguel Zarate in Philadelphia July 22.

“The police can’t be policed or reformed under this system,” Wagner said. SWP members join actions to demand the prosecution of cops involved in killings and brutality against working people. “We’re not in favor of the demand to ‘defund the police.’ When working people take power, we’ll replace the police; they can’t just be abolished.”

Paden signed the petition to put Hoeppner on the ballot, subscribed to the *Militant* and purchased the books *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *Cuba and*

*the Coming American Revolution*.

While most campaign teams took place in Philadelphia, several went to small towns and rural areas around Lebanon County, Hershey, Allentown and West Chester.

Wagner and Hoeppner were interviewed by the *Hershey Sun* and *Chester County Press*. The party has a long history in those areas. It championed the formation of the Kaolin Workers Union, a union that represented mushroom workers in Kennett Square. And the SWP built support for the hard-fought strike by 2,700 members of Chocolate Workers Local 464, affiliated with the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union, in 2002.



Chris Hoeppner, second from right, SWP candidate for Congress from Pennsylvania, files petitions for ballot in Harrisburg July 27. From left, campaign supporter Paul Canty; Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for Congress from New Jersey; and Candace Wagner and Osborne Hart, party’s candidates for governor and U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania.

## Join campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books

Continued from front page

ing people, to build our unions as fighting organizations that can build a labor party and fight for a workers and farmers government.”

Hassan welcomed recent efforts to organize unions at Amazon. “The SWP is preparing for bigger struggles in the future,” Britton said. “We are helping to build the leadership that is needed.”

Hassan renewed his subscription and got *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* along with *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.

Convincing *Militant* subscribers to become long-term readers of the paper is at the center of a five-week drive by SWP members in the U.S. and Communist League members in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K. The goal is to win 300 renewals from subscribers and sell 300 books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders to them.

### Defending workers and our families

When Walmart worker Kerline Marcelin got a flyer about the SWP campaign in Miami she recognized one of her co-workers, Steve Warshell, was the party’s candidate for U.S. Senate.

“Some things you say, I don’t know about,” she told Warshell, “but one thing for sure I agree with is what you

say about families. I am a new mother and sometimes we don’t know how we’re going to make it. We barely have enough money for rent.”

“What the SWP raises is tied to fighting for conditions that make supporting a family affordable,” Warshell said. “We need jobs, protection from skyrocketing prices, affordable child care, access to family planning including abortion.” Marcelin got a copy of the *Militant*.

In Louisville, Kentucky, Gio Akpaglo told Samir Hazboun, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Ohio, and party member Amy Husk that his family has “been having a lot of discussions about abortion,” when they visited him July 16.

The fight for women’s rights, including access to abortion, is part of the broader fight to defend working-class interests, the SWP members said.

“Families are having a harder time today with bosses forcing many workers to work hours that make it impossible to raise a family, especially without affordable day care,” Hazboun said. “We need to support fights like the FireKing strike in Indiana, where Teamster members are striking for better health care for their families and a living wage.”

“Women in Cuba have been able to make tremendous strides forward because of the revolution in 1959,” Husk said. The revolutionary government “advanced programs that benefited

women and families, like child care centers and training programs for women who had worked as domestic help.”

Akpaglo renewed his *Militant* subscription and bought the books *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record* and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* His sister, Reva, purchased *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*.

“So what is the solution to inflation?” bakery worker Joseph Osagie asked Communist League members in Manchester, England, when they knocked on his door July 20.

“We must fight through our unions for cost-of-living adjustments so that whenever prices rise so do our wages and benefit payments,” CL member Hugo Wils replied.

“It’s the same in Nigeria where I come from,” Osagie said. The annual inflation there was 18.6% in June. “Putting two square meals a day on the table is hard.”

“We have to build a working-class party through union struggles that can lead us to take power,” Wils said. Osagie renewed his *Militant* subscription and purchased *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party* and *New International* no. 12 with the article “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun.”

Help distribute the *Militant* and campaign for SWP candidates. Contact the nearest SWP branch listed on page 8.

### New International

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### ‘Militant’ Renewal Drive June 25-August 2 (week 4)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Book quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Atlanta	18	14	18	13
Chicago	25	20	25	24
Cincinnati	18	17	18	14
Dallas-Ft. Worth	16	18	20	26
Lincoln	5	5	5	6
Los Angeles	25	25	25	24
Miami	7	10	7	6
Minneapolis	16	12	16	14
N. New Jersey	16	13	16	10
New York	25	17	25	7
Oakland	20	17	20	17
Philadelphia	8	5	8	5
Pittsburgh	12	6	12	4
Seattle	16	11	15	20
Washington	13	8	13	9
Total U.S.	240	198	243	199
Prisoners		24		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	12	10	15	21
Manchester	10	11	10	12
Total U.K.	22	21	25	33
Canada	25	24	25	27
New Zealand	5	6	5	7
Australia	7	5	7	3
Total	299	278	305	269
SHOULD BE	300	240	300	240

## California SWP: ‘Back port truckers! For a labor party’

BY NORTON SANDLER

LOS ANGELES — Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for California governor, spoke about opportunities to expand the reach of the party and its program to working people at a *Militant* Labor Forum here July 23. Also speaking was Phil Gavcus, an emergency room nurse at Providence St. John’s Hospital in Santa Monica.

Britton described SWP members’ participation in protests at the Port of Oakland organized by owner-operator truckers demanding an exemption from California Assembly Bill 5, which reclassifies the drivers as employees not independent contractors. “Many unions, including the Teamsters and the Service Employees International Union, touted this bill as providing a road to organizing these ‘misclassified’ workers into their unions,” he said.

“Uber, Lyft, Door Dash and other gig outfit bosses spent \$200 million to win

a ‘yes’ vote on a ballot measure that emptied their employees from AB5.

“AB5 is no substitute for organizing truckers into a union,” said Britton. He urged participants to read *Teamster Politics* by SWP leader Farrell Dobbs. It describes how a fighting Teamsters union in the 1930s reached out to independent truckers to bring them into the union.

Gavcus, a longtime reader of the *Militant*, said he appreciates the paper’s coverage of the labor movement. He’s a member of his union’s bargaining committee and described the shifts without breaks imposed by management on the nurses, the lack of supplies and low pay. He urged participants to join an Aug. 1 union protest at the hospital.

“The capitalist crisis we speak of is a growing crisis of trade and production. It is not new,” Britton said. “Capitalists face a declining rate of profit, even as they rake in billions in profits off the labor of workers.

“They face intensified competition for markets, raw materials and labor. Competition among capitalist countries brings with it the likelihood of more and bigger wars. As brutal as Russian President Vladimir Putin’s assault on Ukraine is — the largest war in Europe since World War II — the next one could be more destructive and widespread.

“Neither Democrats nor Republicans have any answers to inflation, or the jobs crisis faced by millions,” Britton said. “Class struggle, not class collaboration is what is needed. Use our own organized power. We should never subordinate working-class interests to the employers and their parties, whether Democratic or Republican.

“Independence, *class* independence is required if the working class is to advance like we can in the coming years. We need our own party, a labor party that can fight for a workers and farmers government.”



# Moscow, Tehran, Ankara summit

**Continued from front page**  
nant imperialist power with vast military might deployed across the region.

For Putin, shunned by many governments after he launched his murderous war against Ukraine, the Tehran summit was intended to paint a picture of Moscow as a world power, including for domestic consumption, and to push back against efforts by Washington and other imperialist powers to isolate it.

Putin admitted to Iranian officials that U.S.-led sanctions had created “colossal” difficulties and hoped the trip would cement ties with Iran. The counterrevolutionary regime in Tehran has intervened in conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen. Like Moscow, it is subject to sanctions levied by Washington. The Russian government is dangling the prospect of grain deliveries to Iran, whose population has been hit hard by food price inflation.

Iran’s Ayatollah Ali Khamenei welcomed Putin, stating support for his war in Ukraine. But Tehran denied it would supply Moscow with drones.

Hours before Putin’s arrival in Tehran, the National Iranian Oil Company and Russian state-owned gas producer Gazprom signed a deal worth \$40 billion in offshore gas projects and a pipeline agreement. Iran’s capitalist rulers are especially keen to boost their relations with Moscow, even as friction between Iran and Russia rises, with Russian oil traders aggressively undercutting Iranian counterparts in sales to China.

Erdogan went to the summit pressing Moscow and Tehran to support a new offensive he’s threatening in northern Syria against Kurdish militants. The operation’s goal is to deal blows to the autonomous zone carved out by the Kurds, an oppressed people who have been denied their own homeland by the rulers of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey.

Erdogan got nowhere. Both Moscow and Tehran said no.

Turkey straddles the mouth of the Black Sea, a key trading route for both Ukraine and Russia. The Turkish rulers have the second-largest army in the U.S.-led NATO alliance, and are casting themselves as mediators in the Ukraine war. The Turkish government and U.N. officials brokered a deal between Moscow and Kyiv July 22 in an effort to clear the way for exporting millions of tons of Ukrainian grain, as well as Russian grain and fertilizer.

Erdogan condemned Moscow’s invasion but kept the door open for talks with Putin. Turkey is now a prime destination for Russians unable to access financial services in the U.S. and Europe.

At the same time, weapons manufacturers in Turkey are increasing the supply of drones and military-grade protective gear to the Ukrainian army.

Since 2016 the Turkish rulers have launched four military incursions into Syria, where Tehran and Mos-

cow provided decisive military force to prop up the regime of Bashar al-Assad during Syria’s civil war. The Turkish government backs Islamist forces opposed to Assad. Moscow used its intervention in Syria to secure greater control of the port of Tartus on the Mediterranean Sea, a key base for its naval forces, and to strengthen its political hand against the U.S. and other rivals.

Washington keeps 900 soldiers in Syria, to protect its interests in that country’s oil fields that the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces control.

### Sharp differences over Israel

One of the sharpest differences between the three powers taking part in the summit is over relations with Israel.

The Iranian regime openly calls for the destruction of Israel and expulsion of Jews. It gives aid to Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, both of which carry out attacks on Israel. Tehran also continues its long-term effort to develop nuclear weapons.

The Israeli government maintains relations with Putin, as it carries out airstrikes in Russian-controlled Syrian airspace targeting Tehran-backed militias and missile bases, without retaliation from Moscow.

In the last year Erdogan has sought to restore relations with the governments of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Israel. Last month he hosted and met with Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid.

Just days after the summit the Russian and Turkish governments announced new talks, set for Sochi, Russia, Aug. 5, this time without Tehran.

### Panama actions protest soaring prices, lack of jobs



Reuters/Erick Marciscano

In the largest sustained protests in decades, workers, students, members of Indigenous groups and others have taken to the streets in Panama demanding government action against rising food and fuel prices and joblessness, and opposing the propertied rulers’ indifference to living conditions facing the toiling masses. Above, demonstration in Panama City July 12.

The actions, which began in late June, have included strikes by teachers’ and construction workers’ unions, street actions, and blockades on the Pan-American Highway, the country’s main artery.

“The current situation is unbelievable,” medical student Janireth Dominguez told Al Jazeera. “There are no medical supplies, there are salary cuts, and there is no work.” The official unemployment rate is 10% and the government-calculated inflation rate rose to 5.2% in the year through June. Gas prices have climbed by nearly 50% since January, to \$5.75 per gallon.

“In my 68 years of life, I am tired of seeing governments that promise, go up, steal, go down, the next one follows and here we are lacking everything, medicine, education, food,” retiree Lliana Arango told the media.

Under pressure, the government of President Laurentino Cortizo agreed July 17 to cut gas prices to \$3.25 a gallon and promised to discuss curtailing food costs. But protesters said this was far from enough in a country where a few have so much and so many have so little. They remain in the streets.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

# Independent truckers strike shuts Port of Oakland

**Continued from front page**  
owner-operators. Challenges to the law by trucking firms have lost in court.

The majority of drivers out of the Port of Oakland are owner-operators, and the protesters overwhelmingly own only one truck, which they drive. AB5 forces them to either hire on as employees at a shipping company or to set themselves up as a one-person “corporation,” and face the fees and licensing that requires, and dealing with all the paper work.

“I would effectively be both the worker and the boss, filling out forms on how I was paying myself,” one trucker told the *Militant*.

The port, one of the busiest in the U.S., resumed normal operations July 25, with some truckers protesting in areas the cops designated as “free-speech zones” and others staying home.

Owner-operators already face big challenges in making a living, including all the costs of operating a truck, from maintenance to gas. A set of new tires costs thousands. Insurance can be another \$2,000 a month. On top of that are fees levied by multiple government agencies, from vehicle registration to business licenses. Cops are continually issuing citations, which can be as much as \$10,000, for things like hauling over the weight limit. This is considered the drivers’ responsibility, but truckers say it’s the shippers’ fault if they put on too much freight.

The rates truckers are paid don’t keep up with inflation, trucker Ich Le told the *Militant*, so he has to work two jobs. Despite long hours, he says it’s still a struggle.

Miguel Iraheta, who has driven for

28 years, said he has to buy a new truck because California environmental laws require all trucks to be less than 13 years old, and that will cost some \$200,000. He said it now takes \$2,000 to fill his tank!

AB5 was sponsored by former Democratic state Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, who is now head of the California Federation of Labor. The bill was backed by Teamster union officials and some truckers as a response to a real problem — shipping and trucking bosses profiting from the abuse of owner-operators, who are forced to absorb all the costs of running a truck without being able to collectively negotiate for higher wages, medical benefits and pensions, and who are forced to wait uncompensated for hours while their trucks are loaded and unloaded.

Some of these truckers want to be treated as employees of the shipping companies, but instead are treated as “contractors” so the bosses can keep their labor costs down.

### Port truckers need union, SWP says

Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for California governor, joined the truckers’ picket lines. No legislation, especially a dictate imposed on them that owner-operators believe will make their situation worse, can substitute for building a union and developing the leadership needed among the truckers themselves,” he told the *Militant*.

“Gov. Gavin Newsom’s arrogant refusal to even meet with the owner-operators is a lesson in the disastrous consequences of substituting reliance on Democratic Party politicians

for a course of class struggle.”

Britton said he told picketing truckers how the Teamsters union organized owner-operators along with other drivers into the union as part of the massive strikes that transformed their fighting power in Minneapolis and across the Midwest in the 1930s. He said many recognize that they need to be more organized.

Iraheta told the *Militant* that he would welcome being part of a union if he could maintain his status as an owner-operator. “Unions are where we can get our strength,” he said.

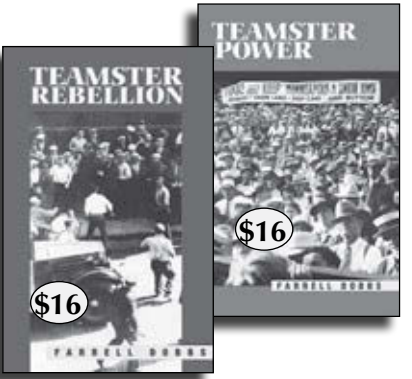
“It’s good the longshore workers supported us when they saw our protest,” Alfonso Juarez, who has worked as an owner-operator for 25 years, told the *Militant*. The truckers paid by the run get nothing when they have to spend long hours being loaded. This gets blamed on the dockworkers. “Maybe this fight will help us unite more in the future.”

“We’ve got to support the truckers,” longshore worker Carlos Gomez said when he saw the pickets. The ILWU is currently in contract negotiations with the West Coast port bosses’ association.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA Oakland

**Why the Oakland Truckers’ Fight Is in the Interests of Labor.** Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Aug. 6, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Rd., Ste. 250. Tel. (510) 686-1351.



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## —ON THE PICKET LINE—

### Montreal Casino strikers enter third month on the picket line

MONTREAL — Montreal Casino strikers, members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3939, are into their third month on strike for pay raises large enough to counter the impact of soaring inflation and for safer working conditions. They told *Militant* worker-correspondents July 22 that they'll continue to fight for what they need.

Over 500 card dealers walked out May 21 against Loto-Quebec, which operates all four government-run casinos in the province, as well as the lottery and sports betting. The casino in Montreal is the largest in Canada. It continues to operate through use of management personnel.

Some 50 workers walked the picket line near the casino underground parking lot. They were set up for the day with food, drinks, music and a tent for shelter, waving union flags to get the attention of casino clients driving into the lot. A number of bus drivers and others honked in solidarity.

Strikers were happy to discuss what they faced, but reluctant to give their names. The company is pressing them to accept the same agreement reached between casino workers and their bosses at other locations in the province.

The 70 dealers at the privately owned Charlevoix Casino northeast of Montreal, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, accepted a raise of 11.5% over five years at the end of June, considerably less than the current inflation rate.

Strikers said their demands reflect higher living expenses in Montreal as well as health and safety issues. Because of abusive scheduling and lack of sufficient breaks, over half the workforce suffers from repetitive motion injuries, such as tendonitis, as well as back strain. Dealers at the blackjack table deal from 6,000 to 8,000 cards a shift. Many dealers work on-call shifts, with just three hours' notice to show up for work.

Picket lines are up from 10 a.m. to 8

p.m. each day and supporters are welcome. Send solidarity messages and contributions to SCFP-CUPE Local 3939 care of [denis.galy@sccm3939.com](mailto:denis.galy@sccm3939.com).

— John Steele

### UK bus drivers strike to protect their wages from inflation

MANCHESTER, England — Bus drivers working for Arriva North West in Merseyside, Greater Manchester, and across Lancashire went on strike July 20 to fight to protect their wages from being driven down by double-digit inflation. The strikers are members of Unite and GMB unions.

Unite says its members are striking over an insulting choice of either a 3% raise with no strings attached, or a 6% raise if workers agreed to cutbacks in sick pay and the loss of Saturday overtime pay. Both offers are far below the current government measure of inflation of 11.7% and would constitute a pay cut.

At the depot in Wythenshawe here, Jim Charnley, chairman of the local Unite branch, told the *Militant*, "People are looking at their kids, struggling with fuel, gas, electric. We need to keep up with inflation. What's different now is that the union is supporting strikes."

"I've never known an indefinite strike here before," he added. "We had some one-day strikes about five years ago."

— Hugo Wils

## 40,000 UK rail workers strike for better pay, against job cuts



Manchester South RMT

Rail unionists picket at Piccadilly station in Manchester during July 27 strike by 40,000 rail workers all across U.K. fighting for pay raise to offset inflation and against job cuts.

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Forty thousand members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union stopped work and joined picket lines around the country July 27. Workers — cleaners, signallers, maintenance workers, station staff and others — are fighting for an inflation-protected wage rise and against job cuts and anti-worker changes to their conditions.

After weeks of negotiations, this was the fourth stoppage. The union has announced two more in August. Five thousand train drivers, members of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, have set a nationwide strike for July 30.

"If anything, the employers' offer has got worse," rail worker Conor Price told

Continued on page 9

## Case strikers stand strong as talks set to resume

Continued from front page

Case New Holland plants — 430 members of UAW Local 807 in Burlington, Iowa, and 600 Local 180 members here. The heart of the fight is their demand for higher wages to counter soaring prices.

"Hopefully, they are ready to move. One sign that they may not be is their decision to change scab herding companies," he added. "If they were ready to concede, they wouldn't bother. Either way we are ready for them."

Some 200 miles south of Burlington 2,500 members of International Association of Machinists Local 837

at three Boeing aircraft factories near St. Louis overwhelmingly voted July 24 to strike beginning Aug. 1.

Many of the issues in the two disputes are similar, especially the determination by bosses at both companies to cut payments for workers' pensions.

"Every union in the country right now is poised to do the same thing we're doing," said Guernsey. "We all recognize that now is the time to fight to win back some of the concessions we've been forced to make over the last decades."

"I'm the lowest seniority employee of this company that will receive a de-

fined benefit pension," Dan Weise, a tool maker who has worked 25 years at the Case New Holland plant in Sturtevant, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent on the picket line July 21. "After me everyone else gets a 401(k). And the company keeps trying to reduce their contributions."

"Management has a bad attitude. They talk at you but don't want to listen," he said. "If you suggest doing something different their response is, 'Do it my way.' Then if you 'do it' their way and it screws up, they want to blame you."

"And if they do finally listen, after things have gone awry, they don't make the necessary changes to keep the same crap from happening again."

"I could retire now if I wanted to. But I'm out here to fight for those guys," he said, pointing to the young men and women on the picket line.

Two of the young workers were Jackie Vasquez, 20, who has worked at the plant for six months, and Vaya Hill, 22, who's got two months in at the plant.

"I was pretty new when the strike began. But I came out because I wanted to stand with my co-workers," said Vasquez, who works delivering parts to the assembly lines and unloading trucks. "I plan on keeping this job. And I could use the pay increase the union is fighting for."

"We need a pay increase to keep up with rising prices," said Hill, a single mother of two. "This job can be a steppingstone to get me to where I need to be to support myself and my family. That's why I came out. You have to choose which side you're on."

Help get the word out about the strike and win solidarity! Contributions and messages of support can be sent to UAW Local 180, 3323 Kearney Ave., Mount Pleasant, WI 53403, and UAW Local 807, 9313 Koestner St., Burlington, IA 52601.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 11, 1997

NEW YORK — Fifty-seven workers from Mexico are being held incommunicado and under house arrest by New York City authorities and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The immigrants, including 12 children, were taken into custody following a raid by New York City police of two apartments in the mainly Latino community of Jackson Heights, Queens.

The workers, all of whom are deaf, said they had been forced to labor up to 18 hours a day selling trinkets on subway cars, and at area airports and malls.

Efraín Galicia, a leader of Unimex, a coalition of Mexican organizations in East Harlem, tried to see them. "These workers are being treated like criminals, when in fact they should be considered heroes of society" for bringing to light this situation. He called on the U.S. government to grant amnesty to these workers and to grant them work permits.



August 11, 1972

Evidence continues to mount of sharpening struggles between Soviet national minorities and the Moscow bureaucracy with its policies of Russification. In Soviet Estonia the appearance of an organization is reported that calls for a referendum on self-determination.

This report is enough to show that a significant development has surfaced in the third Baltic republic. It comes in the wake of a recent open letter by 17 Latvian Communists protesting Russification and the demonstrations in the city of Kaunas in May calling for "freedom for Lithuania" and "freedom for young people."

It has been a frequent practice in recent years for Soviet authorities to use commissions of "psychiatric experts" to rule political dissenters insane, that nothing is wrong except "hooliganism," drug culture, or individual personality problems.



August 11, 1947

Price rises have wiped out most wage gains and slashed purchasing power of the majority of wage earners below the reduced post-war levels of 1946. And the upward acceleration of prices now under way will cut real wages down to bare subsistence levels.

Why have the workers lost so much ground despite their great struggles?

Because (1) the big monopolists have been able to slice real wages by forcing up prices. The workers must conduct a struggle for a sliding scale of wages that would raise the wages automatically with every rise in living costs.

Because (2) by their opposition to a labor party movement, the union leaders have upheld Wall Street's political monopoly. The workers can achieve power only through their own party and the advancement of a labor political program to wipe out existing inflationary and anti-union legislation.



Support Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told an Arab League summit in Cairo July 24 that charges claiming Moscow's blockade in the Black Sea is "exporting hunger" are nothing but Western propaganda. But the fact is prices of vital commodities like wheat and barley have soared 187% in Sudan, 86% in Syria and 60% in Yemen since Putin invaded Ukraine.

As one of the world's largest exporters of wheat, corn and sunflower oil, Ukraine has over 20 million tons of grain held up by Moscow's blockade. Its economy is being choked, as only limited amounts of grain can be shifted overland to the rest of Europe by rail, road and river.

The Russian military has repeatedly attacked Ukrainian food warehouses, silos and other agricultural facilities. And large quantities of Ukrainian grain have been looted from occupied areas.

Lavrov told the Arab League meeting that the Kremlin's goal is to "liberate" all Ukrainians from Kyiv's "unacceptable regime." Days earlier he told Russian state media the Kremlin's goals in Ukraine go far beyond seizing the eastern Donbas region. It includes occupying "the Kherson region, the Zaporizhzhia region and a number of other territories."

Putin continues to bombard civilian areas in Ukraine's major cities all across the country, seeking to intimidate and cow the population.

"The Socialist Workers Party demands Moscow get out of Ukraine — *all of Ukraine* — immediately! We hail the courageous defense Ukraine's forces and working people are waging, including in occupied territory," Chris Hoepfner, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress from Pennsylvania, told the *Militant* July 25. "The road forward is to combine this resistance with reaching out to build class solidarity between Ukrainian and Russian working people, and workers worldwide, including here in the U.S. That will undermine Putin's war from within.

"As it is today, the severe economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. rulers and their imperialist allies hit Russian working people hardest. They give Putin a handle to cut off solidarity."

The national consciousness of Ukraine is being transformed by the effects of the Kremlin's brutal war. In Russian-speaking areas under the boot of Moscow's occupations in the coun-

try's east and south, or hit by bombardments, there has been a steep fall in support for Russian domination.

Over 6 million Ukrainians have been displaced internally, many relocating to safer areas in the western part of the country. Five million more have been forced to flee the country to Poland and other countries. Hundreds of companies have shifted production to the less war-affected west. Russian-speakers from the industrialized east are welcomed by people in the mostly rural, largely Ukrainian-speaking west.

"This is a big cocktail that we call Ukraine," Vadim Beshpalov, a Jewish cafe owner in Ihnytsya who's originally from Kyiv, told the July 22 *Washington Post*. "It's all being mixed up."

These experiences are strengthening the determination of working people in Ukraine to unite to defend their country. And they are deepening trends that have developed since the powerful working-class Maidan uprising in 2014 overthrew the pro-Moscow government of Viktor Yanukovich. Support for rightist political groups has plummeted, as well as backing for pro-Russia parties.

Putin's war runs into problems

Despite Russia's more than three-fold advantage in population, Moscow's invasion has bogged down. The scale of the Kremlin's losses and the brutality of its five-month-long invasion is demoralizing many Russian troops. There are pockets of working-class anger across Russia itself, liable to spread as the heavy losses mount.

"If our country had been attacked like this, we would also be defending our-



Yelena Osipova protests Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in St. Petersburg this month with her art, "Mothers and wives, stop the war!" and "We are all hostages of an imperial power's provocative policy." Onlookers saluted her, chanting "No war!" She was detained then released.

selves, like they are," a Russian mother, Valya, told the BBC July 14. "We would be angry, too." She last spoke to her son Feb. 20. He was killed at the front soon after. Only just officially notified, she asked that her real name not be used for fear of repercussions.

"We're the lowest class. We're simple country folk," Valya said. "All the lads doing the fighting are from remote regions of Russia. Not Muscovites. There are no sons of government officials there."

Putin has carried on a relentless effort to silence all opposition to his war. When tens of thousands took to the streets all across Russia to protest his invasion, he unleashed a wave of arrests,

torture and imprisonment. News reports that criticized any aspect of Putin's so-called special military operation led to the firing and persecution of reporters and any others involved.

While many Russians believe — or are reconciled to — state media propaganda, others have learned the truth the hard way. Valya, in contact with soldiers' mothers across Russia, says, "They hate the government. They hate Putin. They all want this war to end. All the mothers do."

"If the mothers of all the soldiers there now, and the mothers who've lost sons, if they all rose up, can you imagine how big that army would be?" she asked. "And they will. Their nerves will snap."

Ukraine gov't uses martial law to impose anti-labor laws

BY JANET POST

Ignoring opposition by a united labor movement, the Ukrainian parliament is taking advantage of Moscow's invasion and martial law conditions, which ban strikes and protests, to pass anti-labor laws long sought by the country's bosses. Crafted by the capitalist government of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to boost bosses' profits, the laws tear up contracts won by unions, impose longer hours and give bosses greater power to fire workers.

At the same time, workers hit by the measures are helping lead resistance to Moscow's invasion, as combatants in the Ukrainian armed forces, in territorial defense units and in protests in cities occupied by Russian forces.

Parliament eliminated collective bargaining rights at any job with 250 workers or less, turning labor agreements into "individual employment contracts" July 20. More than 70% of the Ukrainian workforce would be affected by this change. Workers can be thrown out of their jobs without the possibility of defense by their union, forced to do jobs not in their contracts, have their work-week increased from 40 to 60 hours and their vacation time cut.

To win passage of the new law, a clause was added saying the measure would only apply during the war.

"But it is clear that no one will be able to undo this situation later," wrote Mykailo Volynets, chairperson of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) and a member of

parliament. "The labor code will no longer apply, collective agreements will be eliminated."

Ukraine's two largest labor federations — the KVPU and the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU), which dates back to Stalinist rule in the Soviet Union — have joined forces to fight the government measures.

The laws "will lead to the violation of the rights of Ukrainian workers, who are doing everything possible to help the country win the war and restore peace," Volynets said.

At the ArcelorMittal plant in Kryvyi Rih, the largest steelworks in the country, bosses have already suspended parts of the union contract, the Trade Union of Metallurgists and Miners says.

A second bill passed July 20 will permit bosses to hire up to 10% of the workforce on "casual" or "zero-hour" contracts. Workers could be given as little as 32 hours of work per month and would be "on-call."

Some workers on military duty are paid by the companies where they work. But parliament voted for a measure transferring these payments to the government. This has resulted in steep pay cuts. Workers have begun taking wage grievances to their unions.

Another bill due in parliament would confiscate buildings owned by the FPU that are now being used to house workers displaced by the war. Since February, some 300,000 Ukrainians, including women with children, family members of military personnel, those disabled

and elderly have received shelter, food, and medical care in these facilities.

"Those who have attempted to weaken worker and union rights in Ukraine for more than a decade have now seized upon the wartime crisis to push through those provisions," the FPU stated July 20. "While promising steadfast commitment to the nation's defense, Ukrainian unions stated strongly that the war should not be used as an excuse to gut workers' rights."

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Argentine military officer found guilty for 1972 Trelew massacre

BY SETH GALINSKY

A Miami jury found Argentine naval officer Roberto Guillermo Bravo liable July 1 for his role in what has become known as the Trelew Massacre, in a civil case brought by relatives of four of 19 political prisoners who were gunned down at a military base there in 1972.

The 50-year campaign that resulted in the trial helps expose the crimes of the monstrous U.S.-backed military dictatorships that ruled Argentina for much of the 1960s, '70s and '80s.

In 2012, three other officers who were with Bravo that day were found guilty of murder in an Argentine federal court and sentenced to life in prison. Argentine law prohibits trial in absentia and Bravo remained virtually untouchable in the U.S. But under the U.S. Torture Victims Protection Act, government agents responsible for torture or extrajudicial killings abroad can face civil penalties in the U.S.

The Miami jury awarded \$24 million to family members of Eduardo Cappello, Rubén Bonet, and Ana María Villareal de Santucho who were murdered that day, and of Alberto Camps, who was gravely wounded.

Bravo testified that he shot at least 30 bullets from a machine gun and ordered the other officers to shoot, but claimed, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that one of the prisoners had grabbed an officer's gun and that Bravo only fired in self-defense.

The family members are using the verdict to strengthen their fight to have Bravo extradited to Argentina to stand trial for murder.

"My father survived the Trelew Massacre and wanted to dedicate his life to expose the truth of what happened, but he was murdered before he could see justice," Raquel Camps said in a statement. She hoped the trial will "help us achieve his goal."

"This case was never about the money," Ajay Krishnan, the lawyer representing the families in the case, said in a press release. "It is about addressing a historic and heartbreaking injustice."

The massacre took place during the military dictatorship of Alejandro Lanusse amid government repression

aimed at derailing rising working-class struggles in the late 1960s and early '70s that threatened capitalist rule in Argentina, part of a broader upsurge of workers and peasants in Central and South America.

Working-class upsurge in Argentina

The potential power of the working class was shown by the Cordobazo, when workers and students rose up on May 29, 1969, in Córdoba, Argentina's third-largest city and center of the country's auto and aerospace industries. Workers from auto plants, foundries, meatpacking and other factories went on strike and along with students headed to a rally in solidarity with protesters killed earlier in the week in the cities of Corrientes and Rosario.

Police fired on the protesters, killing Renault worker Máximo Mena. Entire working-class neighborhoods joined the revolt, building barricades, directing traffic, sharing food from common pots. An eyewitness report published in *Intercontinental Press* said, "By 3 p.m. 400 city blocks marked by bonfires and barricades had become a liberated zone in the hands of the population."

When the government sent in troops, working people held off the army all night. By the end of May 31 the army had retaken the city at a cost of six dead, 50 wounded and hundreds arrested. But it was unable to impose stability for the capitalist rulers.

The 1969 Cordobazo marked the opening of a prerevolutionary situation in Argentina. Over several years, auto, oil, telephone, meatpacking and other workers waged hard-fought strike battles including factory occupations. Within industrial unions, class-struggle tendencies increasingly challenged the conservative trade union bureaucracy.

Debate over guerrilla warfare

Amid the growing ferment and the instability of bourgeois regimes, revolutionaries worldwide debated the course needed to lead working people to take power out of the hands of the capitalist class. Some, including the current in the world revolutionary movement that the Socialist Workers Party in the United States was part of, sought to build revolutionary parties rooted in the struggles of working people.

Others in Argentina and much of Latin America instead promoted guerrilla warfare by small groups as a strategy to take power. In 1970, the Peronist guerrilla group Montoneros kidnapped and assassinated former Argentine president Pedro Aramburu. Groups such as the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, and the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) carried out similar actions.

That ultraleft course left the working class on the sidelines and made it easier for the capitalist rulers to victimize revolutionary fighters and union militants. Thousands of courageous, revolutionary-minded militants were killed by the military.

The lessons of these class-struggle experiences can be found in *The Leninist Strategy of Party Building: The Debate on Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America*, by Joseph Hansen, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party.

Myanmar resistance protests execution of political prisoners



Tachileik News Agency

Still unable to stamp out resistance to its rule 17 months after they carried out a bloody coup, Myanmar's military brass is stepping up repression, executing four political opponents July 23, the first use of the death penalty in more than 30 years.

Phyo Zeya Thaw and Kyaw Min Yu were convicted under draconian anti-terrorism laws. Hla Myo Aung and Aung Thura Zaw were convicted of killing a military informant. All four were hung after closed-door trials where they were barred from being represented by attorneys. Relatives were not informed until after the executions were carried out. Protesters marched against the killings in Yangon two days later, carrying a banner saying, "We will never be frightened."

At least 117 people have received death sentences for their part in mass protests and strikes, which erupted following the Feb. 1, 2021, coup. Three months later thousands protested in Kyaukse City in Shan state, above. Military chiefs overthrew the government of the National League for Democracy, a capitalist party headed by Aung San Suu Kyi, who had been elected in a landslide three months earlier. One of those executed, Thaw, was a legislator in Suu Kyi's government.

Since the coup, the regime has gunned down unarmed demonstrators, bombed protest encampments and burnt down thousands of homes.

For decades Myanmar's rulers relied on stoking ethnic animosity and using the military to wage war against dozens of groups in regions where ethnic minorities are a majority of the population. These conflicts continue. But during the struggle against the coup, protesters forged unity among ethnic groups to fight military rule.

— TERRY EVANS

In May 1972 the Argentine government began moving political prisoners to more remote locations to isolate them from supporters and unfolding struggles. A group of 25 prisoners who belonged to one or another of the guerrilla groups was sent to Rawson prison in Argentina's Patagonia region. In mid-August they tried to escape. Six succeeded, including Mario Santucho, a central leader of the ERP, and flew to Chile and later to Cuba. Nineteen were recaptured and detained on the Almirante Zar Naval Base near the city of Trelew. They were repeatedly tortured and subjected to mock executions.

In the early morning of Aug. 22, 1972, four naval officers, including Bravo, ordered the prisoners to come out of their cells and line up in the hallway. Without warning the officers opened fire with machine guns and pistols. Some prisoners who survived retreated to their cells, where the officers methodically tracked them down. By the end of the day only three survived: María Antonia Berger, René Haidar and Camps.

Berger, in a letter she sent out from captivity, described how she "tried to play dead." An officer came in to her cell and shot her already dead cellmate in the head, and then shot Berger. "The bullet went through my chin, smashed my right jawbone and lodged behind my right ear."

Campaign to free political prisoners

The Socialist Workers Party in the United States and the *Militant* joined with others around the world

in a campaign to save the lives of the Trelew survivors and other political prisoners. They held public meetings and circulated petitions signed by prominent individuals.

The three survivors were only freed in May 1973 when a civilian government replaced military rule. In the years after a new military coup in 1976, all three were assassinated by the regime.

From 1976 to 1983, in what became known as "the dirty war," the military junta — with Washington's complicity — killed or "disappeared" some 30,000 people. Some 500 children of those killed were also seized and given up for adoption, often to the families of military officials.

Meanwhile Bravo was living the good life in the U.S. Soon after the Trelew massacre he was sent to the U.S. as a military attaché to the Argentine embassy. He was given U.S. citizenship and set up his own health services business, making millions on U.S. government contracts.

The Argentine military dictatorship, facing increasing resistance, finally relinquished power in 1983. For decades, even under the military regime, the families of those killed and their supporters — from the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo to the relatives of those killed in Trelew — courageously fought to find out the truth and expose the crimes of those responsible for the deaths of their loved ones. The recent trial is part of those hard-fought efforts.



# ‘Everything has changed,’ Stalin destroyed the Russian Revolution

From Lenin to Stalin by Victor Serge is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for August. Serge was a participant as history was made by the Russian Revolution and the Communist International. This excerpt is from his account of the revolutionary workers and farmers republic under the Bolsheviks and V.I. Lenin's leadership — and then the political counterrevolution carried out by a privileged bureaucracy led by Joseph Stalin. In the 1930s, Serge was jailed for supporting the opposition fighting to defend Lenin's proletarian internationalist course. He wrote the book after leaving the Soviet Union in April 1936, just before Stalin's purges and Moscow's frame-up trials. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

### BY VICTOR SERGE

The entire first phase of the Russian Revolution seems to me today to have been dominated by the utter honesty of Lenin and his group. It was this that attracted all of us to him, regardless of our nationality and our viewpoint. ...

Everything has changed.

The aims: from international social revolution to socialism in one country.

The political system: from the workers' democracy of the soviets, the goal of the revolution, to the dictatorship of



Petrograd Soviet during 1917 Russian Revolution. Victor Serge explains how Joseph Stalin led a bureaucratic counterrevolution against the policies of Lenin, the Bolsheviks and the Soviets.

the general secretariat, the functionaries, and the GPU.

The party: from the organization, free in its life and thought and freely submitting to discipline, of revolutionary Marxists to the hierarchy of bureaus, to the passive obedience of careerists.

The Third International: from a mighty organization of propaganda and struggle to the opportunist servility of Central Committees appointed for the purpose of approving everything, without shame or nausea.

The defeats: from the heroism of the German and Hungarian defeats in which Gustav Landauer, Levine, Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Jogisches, Otto Corvin met their death, to the heartrending background of the Canton Commune.

The leaders: the greatest militants of October are in exile or prison. From Lenin to Stalin.

The ideology: Lenin said, "We shall see the progressive withering away of the state, and the Soviet state will not be a state like the others, but a vast workers' commune. ..." Stalin proclaims that "we advance toward the abolition of the state by way of the strengthening of the state" (sic).

The condition of the workers: the equalitarianism of Soviet society is transformed to permit the formation of a privileged minority, more and more privileged in comparison with the disinherited masses who are deprived of all rights.

Morality: from the austere, sometimes implacable honesty of heroic Bolshevism, we gradually advance to unspeakable deviousness and deceit.

Everything has changed, everything is changing, but it will require the perspective of time before we can precisely understand the realities. ...

It here becomes apparent that moral criteria sometimes have greater value than judgments based on political and economic considerations. ...

It is untrue, a hundred times untrue that the end justifies the means. Justice is not made by iniquity, the world and men are not transformed by means of chains, loudspeakers crying out falsehoods, and vast agencies of intellectuals paid to cram people's head full of lies. Every end requires its own means, and an end is only obtained by the appropriate means. Though the socialist revolution may, in times of crisis, be forced to make use of the old weapons left by bourgeois society, afterwards it must find its own weapons. It can only progress by improving the material and moral condition of the masses. More personal well-being, more liberty, fewer lies, more dignity, more respect for humanity. The socialism which proceeds otherwise gives in to a sort of inner counterrevolution, discredits itself, and risks suicide.

The year 1928 plunged us headlong into that kind of socialism. Basic economic factors can plainly be seen to

determine this evolution. Not that it was fatal; on the contrary, the Russian experience is all the more precious because it shows that economy can be governed, but that the consequences of a policy cannot be evaded. Let us consider the interrelation of cause and effect.

The party bureaus, beginning with the Politbureau, which is a veritable Directory [1795-99 reaction against the French Revolution], lost years before deciding for industrialization. For years they let the kulaks — the rich peasants — make themselves comfortable. ...

They decapitated the old party, but immediately afterwards the government was without grain. Why should the peasant sell his wheat under such disadvantageous conditions? The cities lack bread. The army likewise. Stalin finds himself up a blind alley.

The grain that cannot be bought from the peasants must be taken from them. The Politbureau orders seizures by applying an unforeseen interpretation of Article 107 of the penal code, regarding the concealment of food supplies.

The peasants begin to hide their grain. The farmers sow less. What is the use of sowing if your harvest is going to be stolen? ...

Before entering the *kolkhozes* [collective farms], the peasants slaughter their cattle. It seems just as well to gorge themselves with meat for once in their lives and secretly sell the leather, as to give their cattle to the state, with whose methods they are only too familiar. The cattle disappear.

These years are a nightmare. Famine comes to the Ukraine, the Black Lands, Siberia, to all the Russian granaries. Thousands of peasants flee across the frontiers to Poland, Rumania, Persia, or China. ...

Obviously no one can justify this regime by command — aside from those who, having brought the nation to such a pass, would inevitably be shot if they lost their power. The weight of its responsibilities renders the bureaucracy implacable. It must defend itself. Its entire policy since the consecration of its power has been aimed solely at the preservation of that power and has been dominated by fear and panic.

The Stalinist bureaucracy no longer pursues the policies of the working class, but its own policies. This is the inner significance of its acts.

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# Celebrate Cuba's Socialist Revolution!

Sixty-nine years ago on July 26, Fidel Castro and 160 fellow revolutionaries carried out armed attacks on the Fulgencio Batista regime's Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba and the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes garrison in Bayamo, launching the war that toppled the U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959 and opened the door for workers and farmers in Cuba to make the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

Cuba's toilers showed that the exploited classes are capable of fighting to replace capitalist rule with something better — our own government. Their example is a mighty beacon to working people today, amid growing assaults on our jobs, working and living conditions, as well as deadly wars, like Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, that threaten to engulf the lives of millions.

The attack on the garrisons were defeated. Fifty-six of the combatants who were imprisoned were murdered by the military, and Castro was put on trial and jailed. His courtroom speech, *History Will Absolve Me*, was smuggled out of prison and widely circulated to explain the revolution's goals and recruit.

"When we speak of the people, we are not referring to the wealthy," Castro said, but the unemployed, farm-workers, industrial workers, small farmers and other toilers, "those who know misfortune and are therefore capable of fighting with limitless courage!" To these people "the revolutionary movement is not going to say 'We will give you everything...' but rather: 'Here it is, now fight for it with everything you have.'"

A mass amnesty campaign won Castro's release.

He organized the next steps in the revolutionary

struggle, forming what became the Rebel Army, which took on Batista's forces. As they won over the exploited peasants and conquered territory, they began implementing the program Castro had outlined in *History Will Absolve Me*, organizing working people to take charge of health care, education, revolutionary courts, construction and a sweeping land reform.

To the great horror of the imperialist masters in Washington, the revolutionary government that came to power in 1959 *did* carry that program through to the end. Castro and the July 26 Movement led workers and farmers to replace all the institutions of capitalist rule, take power into their own hands, and use their government to make deeper and deeper inroads against capitalist exploitation and property relations, and assert the socialist character of their accomplishments. The toilers embraced the Marxist character of their leadership.

Hundreds of thousands volunteered for literacy brigades, the newly formed Federation of Cuban Women, their own military defense forces and other steps to expand and defend their revolution. A deep transformation in the consciousness and confidence of working people unfolded.

Workers and farmers in Cuba earned the implacable hatred of the U.S. capitalist class. Ever since, Democratic and Republican administrations alike have tried to crush Cuba's socialist revolution and its example. Join the fight to end the brutal U.S. economic war on the Cuban people and, most importantly, to build a working-class party to lead the millions of exploited and oppressed in the U.S. to emulate their example.

## UK rail workers strike

Continued from page 5

the *Militant* on the picket line at Piccadilly station in Manchester. Joining the large picket were workers employed by different train operating companies and from the firm responsible for rail infrastructure and stations, Network Rail.

Network Rail Chief Executive Andrew Haines conceded to *Sky News* that the company's 8% offer over three years is in real terms a pay cut. Inflation in the U.K. is at a 40-year high. Haines demanded the offer be put to another vote, complaining that the unions have "too much power."

He was backed by Transport Minister Grant Shapps, who told BBC radio that the government was taking anti-union measures to "complete Margaret Thatcher's unfinished business."

"I support the rail strike. We all need a pay rise," said midwife Junko Ozawa as she greeted strikers on the picket line at London's St. Pancras station.

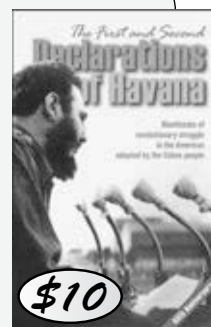
"We're getting great support," Price said. "Everyone is suffering with the rise in the cost of living. If we win, it's not just for the RMT, but for all workers."

### The First and Second Declarations of Havana

Nowhere are questions of revolutionary strategy in the Americas addressed with greater truthfulness and clarity than in the First and Second Declarations of Havana, adopted by million-strong assemblies of the Cuban people.

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## US rulers' parties face political crisis as workers seek road forward

Continued from front page

attempt at insurrection. It comes on top of more than six years of trying to topple Trump on utterly spurious charges of being an agent of Russia.

Democrats want to make Trump *the* issue in 2022, while Never-Trump Republicans share the desire to prevent him from having an influence in their party and making another presidential run in 2024.

The partisan hearings make no pretense at being an objective investigation. Testimony is chosen selectively by the Democrats' hand-picked committee where hearsay evidence is perfectly fine and no cross-examination of witnesses is allowed.

This frame-up committee has interrogated over 1,000 witnesses so far, selectively choosing those whose testimony, has "the best facts to tell a clean, one-sided story," a former Justice Department special task force member told the *New York Times* July 25.

Anyone who has the nerve to refuse to talk to the committee faces the wrath of the liberals. Former Trump adviser Steve Bannon, who declined to appear when subpoenaed last fall, was charged and found guilty of criminal contempt of Congress July 22 and now faces jail time and fines.

The last people jailed for contempt of Congress were the Hollywood 10 — film writers, directors and producers who refused to "name names" when subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1947.

These kinds of star chamber proceedings and trampling on constitutional rights are a real danger for the working class — which is the real target of the capitalist rulers.

The atmosphere of hysteria whipped up by organizers of the hearing, who claim "our way of life" is threatened, was bound to have dangerous repercussions. On July 21 David Jakubonis attacked Trump supporter and Republican gubernatorial candidate Rep. Lee Zeldin as he was speaking at a campaign

event, lunging toward his neck with a sharpened martial arts weapon near Rochester, New York. Jakubonis shouted, "You're done." Zeldin was able to hold off the attack. The Monroe County Sheriff's Office arraigned Jakubonis on a felony, but then released him on his own recognizance! He was later jailed on federal charges.

### Roots of the rulers' political crisis

U.S. imperialism faces a multisided crisis today. It confronts mounting challenges from rival powers — including Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Beijing's growing economic and military clout and the Iranian rulers' drive to get nuclear weapons.

Despite its relative decline, there is no replacement for the U.S. rulers at head of the imperialist world order. U.S. bosses also face the crisis of their system at home. More working people are looking for ways to defend ourselves from sky-high prices, job cuts, speedup, rising interest rates and attacks by employers on our wages, working conditions and prospects of retirement. Rents have shot up a whopping 14.1% this year.

More workers are living paycheck to paycheck; more farmers face bankruptcy and loss of their farms; more young workers are unable to move out of their parents' homes; birth rates are falling; deaths from drug overdoses are at a record high; and violent crime is rising. The number of workers in the workforce remains below pre-pandemic levels and is even lower for women, many driven back into the home because there is no affordable child care.

No wing of the Democratic or Republican parties — from Trump to the democratic socialists on the left of the Democrats — have a way out of this capitalist crisis. They all present different claims of what they will try to do for you, or, more likely, *to* you.

The Democrats are turning on each other. Sen. Joseph Manchin has "doomed humanity," claimed former Obama official John Podesta, after the West Virginia senator refused to sign on to yet another repackaged version of Biden's spending and climate change legislation.

"It's time for executive Beast Mode," wrote Democratic Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse July 14, demanding the White House throw the Constitution overboard and declare a "national emergency" to

justify issuing a raft of executive orders that bypass debate and votes in Congress. The concentration of power in the hands of the executive branch is a danger to the labor movement, making it easier for the rulers to launch wars and go after working people's rights.

Biden's presidency has also come in for shrill denunciation from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who said he doesn't "get moving" but instead gives fellow Democrats "'why we can't' lists!"

Some Democrats just want to dump Biden and be done with it. "Quit, Joe, Quit!" was the headline on a *Washington Post* opinion piece by longtime party operative Steven Isenberg July 24.

In the Republican Party, the rift between Trump and the Never-Trumpers grows wider and more irreconcilable.

The one thing all the wings of capitalist politics can agree on is that the real problem is what Hillary Clinton in 2016 famously called the "deplorables."

The capitalist rulers and the meritocratic middle-class layers that hang onto their coattails have deep-rooted scorn, as well as a growing fear, of the working class.

### We need our own party, a labor party

Workers attracted to Trump were disgusted at having been turned into cannon fodder in the rulers' wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the deteriorating working and living conditions they faced and the fact that none of the politicians in Washington cared about their problems or their lives. Millions of workers turned out to hear Trump present himself as an outsider who claimed he would drain the Washington swamp and bring back jobs.

As workers face a growing crisis imposed by capitalism in decay, and more attacks from the bosses and their crisis-ridden parties, they are looking for an alternative. Only the Socialist Workers Party and its candidates offer a course toward independent working-class political action. They start from the capacities of working people to join together to defend our own interests. The SWP says workers need to organize and use our unions to fight today and to form our own party, a labor party, that can speak for all the exploited and oppressed, and lead millions in revolutionary struggle to take political power into our own hands.

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